

programs save more than \$17 in other costs. That is what I call a smart investment. Many leading economists agree that funding high-quality prekindergarten is among the best investments government can make. An analysis by Arthur Rolnick, senior vice president and director of research at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, showed that the return on the investment of the Perry Preschool Program was 16 percent after adjusting for inflation. Seventy-five percent of that return went to the public in the form of decreased special education expenditures, crime costs, and welfare payments.

To put this in perspective, the long-term average return on U.S. stocks is 7 percent after adjusting for inflation. Thus, while an initial investment of \$1,000 in the stock market is likely to return less than \$4,000 in 20 years, the same investment in a program like the Perry Preschool is likely to return more than \$19,000 in the same time period. William Gale and Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution observe that investing in early childhood education provides government and society "with estimated rates of return that would make a venture capitalist envious."

With research as clear and compelling as this, I defy anyone to give me one good reason why we are not investing more—much more—in sound early education for our children.

I guess we shouldn't be surprised, though, that despite the evidence, this administration has gone in the opposite direction. Under this administration, cuts to early childhood programs have hurt hundreds of thousands of children and the numbers are only growing. Head Start has been cut 11 percent since 2002. The National Head Start Association calculates that by 2008 our country will have 30,399 fewer children in Head Start than in 2007—that figure includes nearly 1,100 children from Pennsylvania.

The President has also called for a freeze in funding for child care assistance—for the sixth year in a row. Currently, only 1 in 7 eligible children receives Federal childcare subsidies. Years of flat funding have already resulted in the loss of child care assistance for 150,000 children. By 2010, 300,000 more children are slated to lose out. In my own State, the current trajectory will mean the loss of \$14 million in childcare assistance by 2012.

This is, very simply, unacceptable. And it is profoundly wrong. And it is fiscally irresponsible.

I began my remarks this morning with the question, "How are the Children?" The current answer to that question is not acceptable.

It is my deep conviction that as elected public servants, we have a sacred responsibility to ensure that all children in this country have the opportunity to grow to responsible adulthood, the opportunity to realize their fullest potential, to live the lives they

were born to live. The Protect All Kids Act is a big step in that direction, and I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill. Everything we do in Congress has some impact—in one way or another and for good or for bad—upon the well being of our children. Our children are our future. With everything we do we must ask ourselves, "How are the children?" We cannot rest until the answer to this most fundamental of questions is: The children—all the children—are well.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is now closed.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM ACT OF 2007

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1348, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1348) to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Kennedy/Specter) amendment No. 1150, in the nature of a substitute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from Alabama, Mr. SESSIONS, is recognized for up to 2 hours.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank the Chair for recognition and want to continue the discussion on the very important piece of legislation that is now before the Senate.

I do believe the immigration system is comprehensively broken. I have said for some time we need a comprehensive solution to it, to comprehensively reform it, but to reform it in a way that will actually work, that will do it with principles we can adhere to in the future, that will move us from a lawless system of immigration.

Most people may not know but 1.1 million people are arrested each year entering our country illegally. Think about the cost and personnel involved in processing that many people. It is a system that is not working. We know many people are getting by the border and not being apprehended.

It rightly causes the American people to question how serious we are in Congress when we say we want to do something about it. They believe we should do something about it. We say we want to do something about it, but eventually, as time goes along, for one reason or another, little ever seems to occur that actually works.

I have stated more than once we can pass a lot of legislation in this Senate dealing with immigration, but if you offer something that will actually work, to actually fix the problem, to actually be effective, we always have much wailing and crying and gnashing

of teeth, and usually those things do not become law.

Last year, I was very critical of the bill that was offered. I said it was fatally flawed. I said it should be withdrawn and urged my colleagues that if we drafted a bill for this session of Congress it should not be based on last year's fatally flawed bill but that we should start over and create a system that would create a genuine temporary worker program, not the flawed program that was there last year, that would move us toward a Canadian-based system where people all over the world could apply to our country, and they would be selected based on their merits and the skills and abilities they bring that would be valuable to our country.

I noted that we needed, of course, effective border enforcement as well as workplace enforcement, and we ought not to create a system that gives someone who enters our country illegally every single benefit we give to those who come to the country legally. The legal people do deserve to be treated in a different way than those who come illegally.

Now, I know as a matter of compassion and practicality we have to wrestle with the 12 million people here. I never doubted that. Nobody doubts that. How we deal with it, though, is a matter that will determine what policies we, as a nation, adhere to. It will send a signal to people all over the world that we are actually going to insist that we have a legal system of immigration and we intend to enforce it.

It is one thing to have a law, but if you are not prepared to enforce it and go through the process that is oftentimes painful to catch someone who violated the law and then have them deported—oftentimes that is a painful process—you either are going to do that or we might as well admit here we have no intention of enforcing any laws.

I do not think that is what we do. Almost every Senator has stated they want a lawful system of immigration, Republicans and Democrats. I do not think we have a problem. I would say yesterday and last week I had a very great concern that a plan was afoot to get cloture on the bill yesterday. The old bill, which I steadfastly believe is not an effective piece of legislation, would then be substituted by a new piece of legislation. That happened last night. It is approximately 300 pages of fine print and maybe 1,000 pages of the kind of legislative bill language we normally use here. It is one of the largest pieces of legislation to be introduced since I have been in the Senate. I think the Presiding Officer, Senator LANDRIEU, might remember some of the omnibus bills may have been that big, but I cannot remember a single piece of legislation since I have been in the Senate that would be 800 to 1,000 pages.

So the scheme or the plan was to try to move that through this week. I am

glad Senator HARRY REID, a man whom I enjoy working with, did agree last night he would not try to move this bill through this week, that we would be able to talk about it this week, that we would be in recess for Memorial Day, and the next week after that we would have another full week of discussions. I think we need more than that.

Madam President, I see my colleague Senator INHOFE is in the Chamber. I say to the Senator, I know he has a tight schedule, and when he is ready to make his remarks, I would be pleased to yield to him.

We are on the track now to have a full week of discussion. But it would be unfortunate, indeed, if my colleagues in the Senate, if the American people, were not to utilize that time to ask seriously what it is we are about in this "grand compromise" that has been proposed for us.

I think there is a possibility that good legislation could yet come out of this that would be worthy of passing. I am aware, as so many of us are, of the language from the supporters of this compromise that, well, they say: Nothing is perfect. The perfect is the enemy of the good. There are a lot of things in the bill I don't like. I think there are things that could be better, and that sort of thing, but I am for it.

I would ask why it is we do not take out those things that are not good? Why it is we do not create a bill we can be proud of and that eliminates weaknesses and problems? Because like jumping across a 10-foot ravine, jumping 9 feet is not good enough. If you jump 9 feet, you still fall to your doom. So let's create a system that will work. Many of the defects are of such a nature that could actually undermine the very principles that have been stated as the basis for this compromise. If we cannot accomplish those principles, why do it?

There are some good things in the bill and some things I am very troubled with. We will talk about them more as we go along.

Madam President, I see the Senator from Oklahoma. We serve together on the Armed Services Committee and I admire him greatly. He cares about our soldiers and has spent more time in Iraq than any Member of the House or the Senate, I suppose, meeting with our soldiers and trying to figure out the best way to handle our efforts there. I admire him greatly, Senator JIM INHOFE.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I thank the Senator very much for the time.

IRAQ

Madam President, before getting into this bill, I want to comment that last week when I was there—it was my 14th time to be in the AOR of the Middle East and where the conflict is—the progress that is being made there is incredible. I sat here and I heard a couple Senators talk about how bad things

were there and that we are losing and all this.

This is the first time—I remember a year ago in Ramadi they actually declared Ramadi was going to be the al-Qaida capital of the Middle East or the terrorist capital of the Middle East. Right now, it is completely changed. IEDs are down 81 percent. Attacks are down 74 percent. Then, next door at Fallujah, they are now totally under the security of the Iraqi security forces.

So all these good things are happening there. I wish Members of this Senate would go over there and see for themselves instead of trying to use it politically to advance their careers. You are doing a great disservice to our troops over there.

But that is not why I am here in the Chamber.

I appreciate the comments that have been made by the Senator from Alabama. I agree with everything he has said. My concern is at 2 a.m. on Saturday morning is when all this came up. We did not have any way of knowing exactly what was in it. Yet I am concerned about all sorts of things, such as how do you make a Z visa work.

But the reason I want to have a little time right now is because I do have an amendment. It is my understanding I will be able to call up this amendment for consideration after the Senator from North Dakota has his up, and that will be later this afternoon.

My amendment is the English amendment. Those Members on the floor can remember a year ago I got an amendment adopted that made English the national language for the United States of America. It passed by a vote of 62 to 35. There are some extremist groups that opposed it and, quite frankly, some of the liberal Members of the Senate were afraid to vote for it without having a backup where they could negate it. This is what happened. They voted for my amendment.

The amendment is very simple. It says there is not an entitlement for language, other than the English language, to be given to people who want Government services. Very simple. That is the same way over 50 other countries, including Ghana in West Africa, have it.

The Presiding Officer knows I have spent a lot of time in Africa on some of the same programs she has been involved with, and most of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa—the ones that speak English—all have English as their national language. Thirty states have it as their national language, but not we in the United States of America.

There is going to be an effort on my part to get this in the bill, and I am going to use the same text I had last time.

It is interesting when you hear different Presidents talk about this issue. In 1999, in his State of the Union Address, President Clinton said:

Our new immigrants must be part of our one America . . . that means learning English.

Everyone said "hooray," and then he came along with an executive order right after that which did away with that statement completely.

President Bush said:

The key to unlocking the full promise of America is the ability to speak English.

We know how many States have adopted this. The polling is incredible. A 2006 Zogby poll reported 84 percent of Americans—I have polls showing up to 91 percent—said English should be the national language. And 77 percent of Hispanics polled by that Zogby poll said the same thing. This poll was in 2006, only a year ago, demonstrating how many Americans believe English should be our national language. Establishing English as a national language should not be viewed as a partisan issue. It is widely supported throughout the country.

In this Congress, in this immigration debate, I am again offering my amendment to make English the national language. My amendment would accomplish three things. No. 1, it would establish English as the national language of the United States of America. No. 2, it would establish that the official business of the Federal Government should be conducted in English, and eliminates all of the entitlements people would have for language other than English. Now, it does respect current law. For example, we have the Court Interpreters Act. The Court Interpreters Act is necessary to support the sixth amendment, the right to counsel, and we are making sure this doesn't affect that in a negative way.

So we create no restriction of providing materials of other languages and allow certain exceptions where it is specifically mandated by statute. We made that very clear.

My amendment does not prohibit the use of other languages. However, my amendment states:

There is no entitlement to individuals that Federal agencies must act, communicate, perform, or provide services or materials in any language other than English.

So it is hypocritical that the immigration legislation we are considering now contains a section generally recognizing the importance of English. However, this section 702 of this immigration legislation does not establish English as a national language.

Now, we had this debate. We were on the Senate floor and debating this about a year ago right now, and people were hesitant to vote against it. We had every kind of excuse in the world. They came trotting in here with State flags that had foreign languages on them saying: We would have to do away with all of these State flags.

It has nothing to do with that. We are talking about entitlements.

We had one Member come in and say: You are going to be responsible for the deaths of Hispanics.

I said: Explain that.

This Member on the Senate floor, right down here, said: Well, you know, they have some bad currents down in

the Potomac, and we have “no swimming” signs that are written in Spanish. If you don’t have those, then people are going to drown.

This has nothing to do with that. You can put up any kind of sign you want that is in the best public interest.

We had one Member come down and say: You would never be able to speak in Spanish on the floor of the Senate.

Well, that has nothing to do with it. I have made a few speeches in Spanish, and there is a reason for it which I will not go into now. But these are things that people say are problems and things that just don’t hold up.

Now, I think it should be pointed out—because a very good friend of mine was on a television station this morning, and I know this individual would not have said what he said if he were aware of the truth, but let me just bring this out. A year ago, when I had my amendment, which would do essentially what the amendment will do if it is passed today, Senator SALAZAR from Colorado came up with an amendment right afterwards. In fact, we voted on it in a matter of minutes after we voted on mine, 62 to 35, and his passed also. All his did was offer language that is totally different from mine.

For example, I am going to read his. It didn’t say English is the national language, it says it is a common language.

Preserving and Enhancing the Role of the English Language: The Government of the United States shall preserve and enhance the role of English as the language of the United States.

But listen to this:

Nothing herein shall diminish or expand any existing rights under the laws of the United States relevant to services or materials provided by the Government of the United States in any language other than English.

There it is, folks: “Nothing herein shall diminish or expand . . .” In other words, it is going to continue to be the same.

Now, there are a lot of people out there who are going to be looking at this amendment. Americans are clamoring to have this done. They don’t understand why we don’t do this. I don’t understand it either. But this language is found in the current immigration bill.

Down here under “definition” in section 702, which was in the language that was put in 2 minutes after my vote took place a year ago, it says:

For the purposes of this section, law is defined as including provisions of the United States Constitution, the United States Code, controlling judicial decisions, regulations, and Presidential Executive Orders.

Now, this is a very significant one because what you hear about quite often is President Clinton’s Executive Order No. 13166 entitlement, which offers entitlement to translation in any language of your choice, anyone who receives any Federal funds. Well, that completely opens the door for every possible language. A lot of people think

we are only talking about Spanish. That is not correct. That Executive order refers to any language at all. This bill we are considering that I will oppose has language in there that would codify that Executive Order No. 13166, and I think it is one that people have to understand.

The Senator from Alabama is not back, so I will take a little bit more time. I am going to read the language now that is actually in the amendment which says English shall be the national language of the Government of the United States: The Government of the United States shall preserve and enhance the role of English as the national language of the United States of America, unless specifically provided by statute.

Now, I use as an example the court interpreters law, existing law right now. It says, unless specifically provided by statute, no person has a right, entitlement, or claim to have the Government of the United States or any of its officials or representatives act, communicate, perform, or provide services or provide materials in any language other than English. If an exception is made with respect to the use of a language other than English, the exception does not create a legal entitlement to additional services in that language or in any language other than English.

Forms—it says:

If any form is issued by the Federal Government in any language other than English, or such form is completed in a language other than English, the English language version of the form is the sole authority for all legal purposes.

Again, there is one sentence in there that says:

Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit the use of language other than English if it is codified into law.

That is what we use the Court Interpreters Act for, and a few others, where there is a constitutional reason—in this case it is the sixth amendment to the Constitution—for having that language in there.

So what I will do until the Senator from Alabama returns is mention a few other things I think are significant. This is not a new issue. This is an old issue, and the old issue goes back to many years ago, to President Theodore Roosevelt in the 1900s:

Let us say to the immigrant not that we hope he will learn English, but that he has got to learn it. He has got to consider the interests of the United States or he should not stay here. He must be made to see that his opportunities in this country depend on his knowing English and observing American standards. The employer cannot be permitted to regard him only as an industrial asset.

Now, that was President Theodore Roosevelt in 1916. I could go through—we have them all the way up, including Ronald Reagan and other Presidents. Later on, I will go over the polling data. Later on, if we have a chance to present this and debate this amendment, I am going to go over all the

polling data. You cannot find any polling data that says less than 84 percent of the American people want to have English as the national language.

So even LaRaza, an extremist, left-wing group, says they found in a 2004 poll that LaRaza did, 97 percent strongly—86 percent—97 percent that is strongly or somewhat agreed that the ability to speak English is important to succeed in this country. That is the extremist group. In other words, if you want to be an attorney or a doctor instead of a busboy, you need to learn the language.

Now, I see the Senator from Alabama is back, but let me just repeat the one thing that I think is very important because so many of our own Members—Republicans and Democrats—believe somehow this bill positively addresses the problem or it makes English the national language. I am going to go ahead and tell you that when they put section 702 in instead of my language, section 701, all they said is English is a common language in the United States. Big deal. But it says in here:

Nothing herein shall diminish or expand any existing rights under the laws of the United States relative to services or materials provided by the Government of the United States in any language other than English.

Well, there it is, I say to my friend from Alabama. Nothing in here would diminish or expand. In other words, it is going to stay like it is today. But then it goes on to say—and this is the critical thing—all the criticism of President Clinton when he passed Executive Order No. 13166, which was an entitlement for a translator in any language you want other than English, or the language of your choice if you are a recipient of Federal funds. So that definition, if we pass this bill—which I don’t think we are going to, and which I don’t want to for many other reasons—but if we pass it, we would say for the purposes of this section of law, the law is defined as including provisions of the U.S. Constitution, the United States Code, controlling judicial decisions, regulation, and Presidential Executive orders. In other words, we are codifying this very Executive Order that so many people in America find so offensive.

So I think this is an opportunity to put this in. Quite frankly, I think unless the bill would be dramatically changed, I still wouldn’t support the bill, but we need to have every opportunity we can, when we are addressing problems with immigrants or legislation of this nature, to make English the national language. Ninety percent of the American people are for it, 77 percent of the Hispanics are for it, and I am for it.

I thank my colleague very much for his time, I say to the Senator from Alabama, who has done a great job.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Casey). The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank Senator INHOFE for sharing this with us. I think he understands, and all of us need to understand, as we continue the flow of immigration at a level we have not sustained before in our history. Once or twice we have peaked at immigration levels close to what we have today. Most of those immigrants, in fact, or many of them, spoke English. Regardless of that, we are sustaining a level of immigration that is unprecedented in American history.

People are coming from all over the world, and English is being taught all over the world. What we need to understand is that it is even more important now that we officially and systematically and effectively emphasize that English is the unifying language because, as you have greater and greater numbers of people who don't speak English as a native language, encouraging, requiring, incentivizing English as the national language is the glue that can hold us together and can avoid cultural divisions that we might otherwise have.

I think the American people understand that, as the polling data of Senator INHOFE showed. Hispanic voters, when they are told about this, recognize it is critical for their children who are going—for them to receive the greatest benefits of the American dream, to flourish in our culture and our economy, that they be able to speak English. For some reason, we went through a period—and hopefully we are coming out of it—where we felt it necessary to try to communicate in foreign languages to other people, therefore diminishing their incentive to learn English and weakening our commitment as a nation that English should be the unifying language.

I thank the Senator for raising this subject, and I believe it is important.

I will just say one more thing. A lot of nations do have trouble getting along. Oftentimes, it goes down language lines. We have even seen our neighbors in Canada almost divide over French and English portions of the country. They wanted to separate from one another, and we see that around the world. So if we are to remain a nation of immigrants, and we are going to do that, I think it may be even more important today that we emphasize the unifying language of English than we ever have before.

I think most people when they came here wanted their children to learn English, and they did so. But we have a situation today that could get away from us in terms of transmitting to them the benefits of citizenship, the benefits of our economy because, if they can't communicate, it won't be effective.

The bipartisan negotiations that were carried out in an attempt to reach a good bill set forth some principles. Those principles seem to be the ones that were leaked as part of a PowerPoint presentation that the

White House worked on. That presentation was made to me. I thought it was pretty good. I thought it was a much better framework for immigration than last year's bill. I said repeatedly in recent weeks that we had a framework superior to last year's bill that could actually lead us to something important.

Unfortunately, the four main principles that were so often talked about—the trigger, a temporary worker program, the elimination of chain migration, and the creation of a merit system and no amnesty for the illegal alien population—are insufficiently effectuated by this legislation. They have the appearance of doing those things and maybe in a few areas improve over current law or last year's bill, but they don't effectively carry it out. So I am worried about that situation.

I am worried that, yes, our supporters say: We have problems with the bill, but overall it is good. If we have problems with the bill, let's look at those problems, let's see if they can be fixed, and let's make a better bill. Let's not pass a bill that we tell the American people is going to fix the immigration problem in America when it has loopholes and weaknesses that will not work and will not accomplish what we are promising—what some are promising—will occur if it is passed. I worry when people say they disagree with large portions of the bill, yet they are for it.

Let's talk about some of the principles that were asserted.

Last year, when this bill was jammed through the Senate Judiciary Committee, of which I am a member, I came up with the idea—actually, it came to me in an interesting way. I realized, why, when I offer amendments on enforcement and to spend more money on this or that item, people would accept them in committee. If you offered an amendment that would change policy—empower State and local law enforcement officers, for example, to participate—you got a push back from other policy matters, but they would just accept any amendment that would spend more money on enforcement. You ask yourself: Why is that so? That is so because they were not spending any money. We are the Judiciary Committee, an authorization committee. We cannot appropriate a dime. So we can authorize money for border patrol, we can authorize fencing, we can authorize prison systems, we can authorize an entry-exit visa system, but if nobody comes up with the money to pay for it, it never becomes law. Do you see?

So I suggested on the question of amnesty that no amnesty be allowed until we have a certification by the Secretary of Homeland Security that the border was secure and that this would be a trigger. The trigger for amnesty would be a certification that the border laws were enforced. That was the philosophy behind the trigger amendment

on which Senator ISAKSON worked so hard on the floor. It was not adopted in committee last year, and when we had a full debate on it, the people who were supporting last year's fatally flawed bill said: Oh, this goes to the core of the bill. We can't support this. It might be OK, but the coalition that put this bill together won't support it. It will cause it to fall apart. So they voted it down by a fairly close margin, but voted it down.

So now we are told: OK, we need a trigger. So one of the principles of this bill is to have a trigger in it. Let me show why I think there are some weaknesses in that trigger and it is not as effective as it needs to be. As a matter of fact, it is not very powerful at all. It applies only to the new guest worker program, but all other amnesty programs will begin immediately. In other words, the legalization process, the Z visas that allow people to stay here, will be issued before any of these steps are actually taken. See, we want to be sure that steps are not just promised but are actually taken, paid for, and implemented, because in 1986 what happened was amnesty was given—and they did not deny calling it amnesty in 1986—amnesty was given on a promise of enforcement, and they never funded the enforcement. They just never did it. We had 3 million illegal people here in 1986, and we have 12 million today. So Congresses and the Presidents since 1986 and before 1986 have never taken these matters seriously and given them the priority needed to be successful.

We have that weakness in the trigger which I mentioned. The legalization process will occur before any of these items are required to be funded and executed.

Secondly, the trigger only requires enforcement benchmarks already in the works, almost accomplished. So it does not require anything new. It does not require one critical thing, I believe, which is a U.S. visit exit system. You come into the country and show your identification. The new system we should have and proponents suggest is in this bill would say you come in with your identification, you show it at the border, you work. When your time is up, you are supposed to exit the country. But there is no system to record whether anybody exits. This was required to have been implemented by 2005. It has been put off and put off. Why? Because it creates a system, I suggest, that would actually work. It is a key component of an honest, effective border control system. If a spouse comes to visit a temporary worker for 30 days, how do we know they will ever leave? Who is going to keep up with this? Do people think agents are going out knocking on people's doors to see if their visiting spouses are still here? That is not the way the system is going to work. So an exit system is not part of a trigger requirement.

The language we wanted and was in the Secure Fence Act that we passed last year requires the Department of

Homeland Security to attain operational control of the border. That is the fundamental principle of the trigger from the beginning. None of that language is in this bill. It does not require the Secretary of Homeland Security to certify operational control of the border. So we don't have a very great trigger.

Also, it requires under the trigger 18,000 Border Patrol agents to be employed—not that we hire new ones whom we plan to hire even above that but only the 18,000 who mostly are already there now.

Last year, right before the election, we passed legislation that requires the construction of 700 miles of fencing. Will that fence ever get built? I suggest that my colleagues read the fine print. We see already the fence is being undermined. There is no trigger requirement that occurs. Only 370 miles of fencing and 200 miles of vehicle barriers are part of the trigger. These have been in the works and some fencing already exists, and that should be there. But that leaves about 300 miles not part of the contingency, and we don't know if the money will ever be there for this 300 miles which we authorized just last fall. Do my colleagues follow me? Just because we authorized fencing last fall does not mean it will ever be built. If you want to say that is a shell game, I have to agree. It is done all the time around here. It is particularly done on immigration matters.

Bed space: We currently have 27,500 detention beds. What does a trigger require before the amnesty process can go forward? It requires 27,500, what we already have. But the bill, in a separate section of this legislation, would require 20,000 additional beds to be built because we need them. It is an essential part of gaining control of the border. Mr. President, 20,000 is not that large a number in the scheme of things, but it can get us to a tipping point where the border can be brought under control. But that is not part of the trigger. There are other matters in the trigger that are not available.

I will note this: If you want to be dubious about the intent of the drafters of this legislation to follow through on some of the things they promise, let me tell you how the bill words it. It is filled with phrases such as “subject to the availability of appropriations” and “authorized to be appropriated.” Those words are used in the legislation 38 times—“authorized to be appropriated.” You can authorize a fence in this legislation, but this is not an appropriations bill. Unless the Congress comes along and funds it, it will never be built. Worse than that, it has “subject to the availability of appropriations.” That is a real suggestion by somebody, I would argue, who never intends to see that section funded appropriately. That was one of the principles.

I am disappointed in the trigger. We were told we would have a real temporary worker program this year, one

that would fit the needs of businesses, and they do have needs, and the agriculture community, and they do have needs, and we would create one that would actually work. But I am afraid this one is set to fail. It is better than last year's bill in a number of ways. Let me tell you how it is better, and that is the good news.

Last year, the temporary worker program allowed an individual to come to this country as a temporary worker for 3 years, and they could bring their spouses and children with them. Then they could extend that 3 years another 3 years, another 3 years, another 3 years—I think indefinitely. Mr. President, 3 years, 3 years, 3 years, as long as you live, and your spouses and children can be here, and any children born here would be American citizens at birth. The first year the person was here, they could apply through their employer for a green card, permanent legal residence, which would put them on the pathway to citizenship within 5 years. That was a temporary guest worker program.

I say that to my colleagues because we need to be alert to the fact that just because it says we have a trigger, just because we have a temporary worker program, when you read the fine print, it may not be what it appears to be. So that was a disaster. That wasn't a temporary worker program at all. After a family has been here for 8, 10, 12 years, their children are in junior high school. Who is going to come and get them and send them home? That is a program which had no chance whatsoever. But the sponsors went around for months saying we have created a temporary guest worker program. That was not so, and I am glad eventually that came to be exposed for what it was.

This year's bill says, as part of the principles, that we would have a temporary worker program where the temporary workers did not bring families. That changes the dynamics dramatically because if they don't bring families, they have an incentive to go home. If they bring their families, their incentive is to put roots down and stay. It is not a temporary worker program, in my view.

So how did it come out in real fine print? In fine print, what we understand is it is not a 3-year program but a 2-year program; that 20 percent of the temporary workers can bring their families, and of the remaining 80 percent, their families can visit up to 30 days. Well, let's say that your spouse is pregnant and you are working here temporarily. You could ask that spouse to come to America for a visit and have good health care and have a child born who would have dual citizenship, or maybe they would stay in the United States and the child can be a citizen because of birthright citizenship. There are some problems with this.

I am troubled by the 2-year situation and the way it works. You come for 2 years, you would go home for 1 year; you come back for another 2 years, you

would go home for a year; come back a third time for 2 years, and then you could never come back again.

What we have in the agriculture community is circularity, where people come for 8, 10, 11 months a year, maybe, without their families, and they work for a season, maybe 8 months, and go home. They are based and their home is among their family and their kin in the town or city or village they grew up in. They go to their church in their neighborhood.

So that is the way that worked, and I was hoping, or thought we would move in that direction. But, no, it looks like it is a 2-year deal, where you can bring your spouse to visit for 30 days, and 20 percent would be able to have their spouses with them the entire stay. They have to post a small bond. But that is not a defining event, I think.

What about the numbers? When I first asked, as they moved the PowerPoint presentation around, how many guest workers, temporary workers was contemplated in this program, I was told about 200,000 by an official in the Bush administration. Well, what do we have now? We have 400,000 to 600,000 workers a year who come up for 2 years at a time and go home for 1 year in between. But if you have 400,000 in this year and they stay for 2 years, and next year you have another 400,000 to go next year, then in years 2 and 3 you are at 800,000, except there is an escalating clause in there that will probably take it well above 900,000—follow me?—instead of 200,000 or 400,000, the real mechanism involved in the temporary guest worker program is to create numbers that amount to almost a million guest workers.

Now, these guest workers are different from the 12 million who will be given legal status here. It is different from the 1 million to 2 million flow of people who will be coming into the country on the citizenship track. This would be 1 million here as guest workers. So you see, we have to get these numbers straight. How many people are being let in by this bill? We are having a hard time getting it out.

Remember, the bill was only introduced last night. A staff offered draft copy of it was produced Saturday morning. So who knows for sure? Who can say for certain what this actually means? I tell you, we intend to look at it, and we intend to make sure the Members of the Senate and the American people understand how big an impact this is.

What we do know, from last year's bill, even after Senator BINGAMAN offered two amendments that passed, and I offered one to reduce the overall numbers, it dropped from 80 million to 200 million over 20 years. Let me go back and repeat that. Last year's bill, as introduced on the floor, the McCain-Kennedy bill, would have allowed into our country 78 million to 200 million people in 20 years. Now, we only have 300 million in America at this time. Do

you understand the significance of that?

I don't know if they knew those numbers or somebody was trying to pull a fast one, but it was breathtaking. We came up with those numbers. The Heritage Foundation was doing an independent analysis, and they came up with very similar numbers. So Senator BINGAMAN offered two amendments and I offered one that passed and it reduced the number to 53 million. Real progress; right? Not so fast.

The current rate of immigration over 20 years in our country is 18.9 million, maybe closer to 20 million. So it was at 53 million, which is 2½ times the current rate of immigration. So I don't think the American people who thought we were reforming immigration ever understood that the real plan was to increase legal immigration by 2½ times.

So I am worried about the numbers in this year's bill, is all I am saying. We are going to look at it. I haven't been able to figure it out yet, but my super staff is getting close, and we are going to keep working on it. But that needs to be acknowledged. I think there is going to be push-back on this huge number of temporary workers, which appears to me to be three times what the administration suggested to me, this year, would be an appropriate number. Of course, the President is bent on having workers for everybody who needs one.

The 2 years, the 2 years, and the 2 years, let us say a person came as a temporary worker and they worked 2 years and went home; worked 2 years and went home; worked 2 years and went home. There are bad things that occur from that program as a practical matter. Is the employer going to depend on this person every 2 years, when that worker has to go home? That is not practical to me. Then they are finished. They, perhaps, had no desire to live in America permanently or become a citizen of America but wanted to be a temporary worker. Yet now they are put in a position where they have to apply for a green card and citizenship and try to compete on this permanent citizenship track so they can keep working. For people who may have no desire to apply for a green card, they would have to, under this system. So I think it creates a magnet for dual citizenship in a way that is not necessary.

I think it would complicate the life of a business to have this break in their employment. I would like to see a system, myself, in which a person could come 10 months a year in America, or less—they may want to work less—and they would have a good ID so they could go back and forth to visit their family or their home as many times as they chose. They would go home each year for several months and could come back the next year, if they chose and if the employer wanted and if they were certified to come back and hadn't been convicted of a crime or done anything else that would dis-

qualify them. That, to me, makes more sense. Maybe the drafters have a better idea than I do on it—I don't think so at this point.

Now, one of the issues we talked about in last year's debate, and I emphasize it because nobody had even considered it, is why shouldn't we go to a merit-based system—a system that is skill based—where we would have people come into this country based on their opportunity for success here, based on their ability to flourish in our economy? What we learned was that Canada does that. Canada spent several years of national discussion, and then their Parliament got together and decided the question. They passed a law that said to the immigration department in Canada, you work with our economics department and you set up an immigration system for our country that says 60 percent of the people who would enter our country would enter based on skills and merit and education that we think are important for Canada because we believe our immigration policies should serve the national Canadian interest. It should make Canada better. We believe this is the right policy.

That was done and is being executed today. I met, in my office last year, with the gentleman who was the director of that program, and he explained to me that it was very popular. They like it in Canada. We had never even discussed it last year. I tried to get a hearing in the Judiciary Committee on it. No, they didn't have time. Senator MIKE ENZI, who was chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, agreed to have a hearing on it, and we did that. We had experts testify on that and very little negative was said about it. The witnesses at various hearings we had all said an immigration policy, in their opinion, should serve the national interest, and a skill-based program serves the national interest. That is why they did it.

Australia does the same thing. Australia has 60 percent enter on merit; New Zealand has a similar program; the United Kingdom is looking at it; and I believe the Netherlands and other countries are considering more movement in that area. The developed world is moving in that area, except the United States. Only 20 percent of the people who enter our country with green cards get those permanent resident green cards based on skills—only 20 percent. Sixty percent, almost, get their permanent residence based on family.

Now, no one disputes, and this bill certainly doesn't, and neither do I, that if we give permanent residence to anyone, to a man, to come to America, he should be able to bring his wife and his minor children. But if you choose to come to America—you tell me, I say to my church friends—tell me why, if you choose to leave your extended family and come to America and establish a new life, what right do you have to demand that your aging parents should

come with you? What right do you have, what moral right do you have to demand that?

That is what we are doing today. Parents are allowed to come, as well as adult children, as well as brothers and sisters—the siblings. So under the current system of chain migration, a person comes to America and they get a green card, or become a citizen, and they are able then to bring their aging parents or bring their brothers and sisters, who are then able to bring their wives and their children. That is how we get nearly 60 percent of immigration in America not based on skills.

That is the policy question I thought had been established when we adopted the new framework that became the basis for the new bill that was introduced late last night. Does the new bill get us there? It does adopt a point system. I have to say I was excited about that because I believe so strongly that was the right direction for us to go. I was excited about that. But as I read the bill, I was very dispirited.

For example, what happens in the years 2008 to 2012 if this bill becomes law? Skill-based immigration will remain capped at the current level of 140,000 for the first 5 years until 2012. Even out of this 140,000, 10,000 will be carved out for temporary, low-skilled workers. I am not talking about temporary workers now but people on a track to citizenship—green card, permanent residence, and then citizenship. The 140,000 green cards we have set aside for that track, they have taken 10,000 of that for the temporary workers who come without a merit-based system.

So there is a step taken in the bill to reduce chain migration, and it reduces it, it appeared, immediately and even back I think 2 years. But it says that if you were an applicant to come into our country for a permanent residence, as part of a chain migration application, you are considered to be a backlogged applicant. As a backlogged applicant, this bill says we are going to give you the opportunity to come and to get permanent residence in America, even though people who applied after a certain date would not get to have that provision applied to them. This will free up some numbers that will not be coming in on chain migration, but the theory was the green card numbers would be shifted to a skill-based, point-based system like Canada's. That is how you get there, and this bill does attempt to do that. Unfortunately, it takes a lot of time to get there.

Under this bill, they will take 8 years of those saved green card numbers and apply them to the backlog. There are about 3 million backlogged chain migration petitions, and each one amounts to about 2.2 persons because they could bring a wife or a child with them, sometimes 3 or 4 children. If you are in the backlog as a brother of a citizen and you have been in the backlog for several years, then you get to come with your family—not just yourself as

a brother, but you get to bring your family—in the next 8 years. So we think it will total up to 6 to 8 million people who are in the backlog. We are not moving to a merit-based system any time soon. Actually, it is going to be 8 years out before it really kicks in. I don't know what will happen in 8 years. I have grown, in my 10 years in this Senate, to be somewhat worried about what we are likely to do when that happens.

I salute my colleagues for making a decision that appears to shift us to a more healthy view of immigration that will be more likely to serve our national interest. But I am disappointed that it is not going to really take effect for 8 years. That is so long, I am not sure I can buy that as a legitimate compromise.

My colleagues say: We did the best we can do. Jeff, there are things in the bill I don't like. I would like to have it take place right now.

Why don't we make it happen right now? Why wait 8 years? We don't have a right to offer amendments and fix that? We need to think about it.

Another thing is, in Canada they have, as I said, 60 percent based on skills. We think the numbers in the United States—from 20 to 22 percent based on skills—will not exceed 40 percent. In fact, Senator KENNEDY, who really opposed this part of the provision, estimates it would only be 30 percent. That is not enough. We need to look at these numbers. If we don't have a proposal which would carry us 50 percent or above, I don't think we have made the kind of real progress in that area that we could.

Also, the system is going to skew, again, to the temporary workers. If you are here as a temporary worker, you get 6 to 8 points for adult sons and daughters who might apply under the point system, 4 points for brothers and sisters of citizens and permanent residents, and 2 extra points if you apply for a chain migration category between May 1, 2005, and now. So a significant number of points are given based on family, I am concerned about that.

Points are going to be given not just for higher skills but for high-demand occupations. That is what the temporary program is for, the high-demand occupations. I think the permanent track to citizenship should clearly shift to a more skill-based system. But we are going to give a lot of this skill-based system personnel—they will get 16 points on the point scale if they are in a high-demand occupation. These could be fairly low-skilled jobs. You could be in the service industry or things of that nature, low-skill personnel and things of that nature, or food processing. That is an undermining of the principle of moving to a merit-based, skill-based system. That worries me, that we are not getting there sufficiently on the point system. It is just frustrating to see that.

Why is that point-based system important in the long run? Just because

Canada has gone through this process and has reached that conclusion? No.

Mr. Robert Rector is a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a premier think tank, a conservative think tank but one of the most respected in America. Mr. Rector has for well over 20 years, I suppose, been recognized as one of the most knowledgeable persons in America on welfare and social policy. He is widely recognized as the architect of the highly successful major welfare reform that was done a number of years ago. Eventually, after 2 vetoes, President Clinton signed it, and it became a very popular program that reduced child poverty and created a system where lots of people went out and found work. The welfare office became an employment office where people can be counseled on how to get work, and people are now out being very proud to be breadwinners, bringing home money—more than they ever thought possible sometimes—just because they got out of the welfare trap and into workplace. That is what Mr. Rector was part of.

At a press conference yesterday, he was very strong in his view that we have a big problem with low-skilled immigrants. He talked about some things you don't like to talk about so much, but it is just a fact, and all these other countries have had to deal with it. When you are low skilled, have low education, you tend to collect more from the government than you put in. That is a big problem. What he concluded was that the necessary fiscal deficit for a house which is headed by a person without a high school degree is \$19,000 a year. He put his pencil on it. He calculated it out. I don't know whether that figure is correct, I didn't calculate the numbers myself but that is what he said yesterday. This is Mr. Rector. He noted that \$19,000 per year in benefits could buy each one of those families a new automobile every year.

He calculated that, over a lifetime, the numbers are worse, that we should calculate the numbers not in the first 10 years where they would be artificially low but calculate them over a lifetime. He calculated that if we pass this bill, the immigrant households headed by non-high school graduates would take out of the U.S. Treasury \$2.3 trillion more than they pay in over their lifetime. That is the group which would be in the 12 million who would be legalized.

There are reasons for that. People with education, with language skills, who have skills and talents America needs, who apply in a point-based merit system, who have any college at all when they come, tend to do very well in America. In fact, the numbers show that if you just had 2 years of college, you tend to do very well and pay much more in taxes than you would ever take out in taxes. We have to be careful that our business friends understand that somebody is picking up the tab if they have low-skilled, low-wage workers. It may not be the employer,

but somebody is paying. It is the Social Security system, it is the Medicare system, it is the American taxpayers who pay.

I see my good friend from Florida.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Will the Senator yield for a moment?

Mr. SESSIONS. I am pleased to yield such time as the Senator wishes.

Mr. MARTINEZ. The Senator is very kind.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. MARTINEZ. I wanted to point out that last year my colleague rightly pointed to a serious problem with last year's bill dealing with chain migration. I recall the Senator coming to the floor and explaining what had not been well understood until then, which is the fact that, as people were acquiring legal permanent resident status, then they would also have the opportunity to bring family members. That would result in a huge problem. We have 12 million illegals. If those 12 million are somehow legalized and then they can also chain migrate their families, we would end up with a problem manyfold what it would be otherwise.

In this bill, we tried mightily to end chain migration, and I think we have for the most part. I want to say to the Senator from Alabama, it is because of his good work last year in pointing out that flaw in the bill that I think now we have corrected and reversed course in what I think is, by some, a real problem in terms of family reunification. But at the end of the day, I think it is the right thing for America.

If we allow those who are here, after a probationary period, after payment of fines, and ultimately after returning to their home country, to legally apply for readmittance, that then chain migration would not be permitted, I think that is a fair tradeoff and is at the heart of what is called by some the "grand bargain," a massive coming together we had. I want to give the Senator very much due credit for having a real hand in what it is that is at the heart of this new agreement.

I realize the Senator may have many other issues of concern. I hope, as we go forward and talk about them, we will alleviate some of those concerns. I think one of the things that has happened is it is a massive bill. Here we have it now still not in printed form as we go through it. I compliment the majority leader for giving us the extra time so we all have a chance to get into what is in the details of the bill.

There has been a lot of emotion and a lot of conversation and a lot of it not very well based on what is in the bill. The trigger is in the bill, and I know Senator ISAKSON from Georgia will be speaking to that this afternoon. It is fundamental. Nothing happens until the border is secure.

I wish to give the Senator credit where credit is due for a good step along the way.

Mr. SESSIONS. I say to Senator MARTINEZ that I thank him for that,

but he was one of the people who stood firm on this issue of a more merit-based, competitive system of immigration, like Canada. Without his leadership, I know it would not have happened. In fact, his personnel leadership was pivotal in a number of areas in this legislation that made it better than it would otherwise have been. I appreciate that.

My concern on the bill is that by saying the backlog gets approved, we delay about 8 years moving to the full implementation of a merit system. I know, when you are in a meeting and you have to negotiate with people—I know Senator KENNEDY didn't want to do this at all.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Right.

Mr. SESSIONS. You had to reach a compromise. But the compromise of waiting 8 years is troubling to me. I like the move. I thank the Senator for his leadership, and that is the point I have tried to make this morning.

I thank Senator MARTINEZ. The Senator himself is an immigrant from Cuba and has risen to serve as a member of the Cabinet of the President of the United States and now an outstanding Member of this Senate. I am proud to know him. I am also proud his wife is from my hometown of Mobile, AL. She is wonderful also.

As I understand the chain migration matter, in fact, it does end chain migration mostly, but it does allow 40,000 parents to come each year. There are some restrictions on it, but 40,000 parents. So those 40,000 more elderly parents—by the way, Canada gives points for youth. They believe Canada benefits from a younger rather than an older immigrant.

But those parents who come—we have to be honest with ourselves are not going to be net gain like a young skilled person. But that was the compromise they pounded away at. Some said family reunification, we have to have family reunification. So instead of eliminating aging parents, they agreed to cap them at about half the number we currently have of parents who get to come each year.

But what I want to ask you to think about is, here is a young man in Honduras who went to high school, graduated, maybe was valedictorian of his class, taken English, utilizes television and radio to improve his English, has 2 years of college. He applies to get in the United States.

He wants to come here very badly. Maybe he has a distant cousin here or maybe he has read about America. Maybe he wants to come here and work and go to college and earn a degree and be a doctor. I don't know what is in that young man's mind. It is a zero-sum game.

If you let the parent in, you deny someone such as that the ability to come in on a more meritorious basis. That is why this is not an easy call and why we need to be clear about this. Every time we allow a chain migrant or an aging parent to take an immigra-

tion slot, we are denying someone who deeply wants to come, who could be selected on merit from the large number out there who want to come to America, that would be more successful and flourish here. That is all I am saying.

We hear stories about familial reunification. I know that is nice to talk about. That could be important to an immigrant who becomes a citizen and wants to also bring their extended family. It might be important to them personally. But the real question is, what we have to ask is: Is this important to the national interest? What is in the best national interest? The best national interest, I believe, and other nations of the developed world have concluded, requires a movement where you can bring your wife and children, but you don't get to bring extended family in.

Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 7 minutes prior to the recess.

Mr. SESSIONS. All right. I will use that and then reserve the remainder of the time.

Another principle of the PowerPoint presentation was the question of giving legal status to persons currently illegally in the country through a new visa. But it was stated as one of the principles that there would be no special path to citizenship. That was a direct quote. "No special path to citizenship."

However, the bill clearly creates a system whereby current people here illegally are treated differently, better, than those who tried to come to the country lawfully.

That is a principle I think we have all said we don't want to breach. In fact, the PowerPoint principle about any new immigration bill stated that would be one of the principles. This bill is not jackpot amnesty, as some would say; but I think it is a form of amnesty, however you want to define it.

I have not tried to use that word too much because I am not sure what it means to anybody. If I use the word amnesty, it tends to mean that you allowed somebody who came here illegally to stay permanently. That is a form of amnesty. I mean, normally they would be apprehended and removed. That is what the law would require.

But whatever amnesty is, I have concluded that the principle we should adhere to is, that if someone did come to our country illegally, and we have now not enforced the law as we would expect the law to be enforced but are going to allow them to stay here in our country, come out of the shadows to have a legal status, that we can do that, but we should not provide to that illegal entrant every single benefit we provide the persons who wait in line and come lawfully.

I see no reason to do that. That is what we did in 1986. The speeches were crystal clear: Never again. This is the last amnesty. Because those people in

1986 understood that if amnesty became the rule, we would totally undermine respect for our legal system. So here we are, 20 years later, granting another amnesty. I think we need to maintain some clarity so there is a difference in status of those who come illegally.

Now, Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, gave a definition. He made a statement that is valuable. "One thing is for sure, if this bill gives them any preferential treatment towards citizenship over people who came into the country in the proper way, that is a non-starter."

I would go further. I think we can give some kind of legal status and certain benefits to people who come illegally, but I believe they should not be given benefits that lead to citizenship—that powerful, wonderful thing, citizenship in the United States—based on an illegal act. I do not think we should. I think we should say forever—in 1986, we said the truth then—you come illegally, you are not going to benefit. We are not going to do this again. We should do that.

Now, if they have children born here, the children can become citizens. But there will be detriments to having come illegally that would be permanent, that are not going to be wiped out. That is my personal view. We will see how it goes.

I would say, with regard to the question of moving to citizenship, there are at least five preferential treatments toward citizenship given to the illegal alien population by this bill. Preferential treatment.

First, illegal aliens who rushed across the border between January 7, 2004—the date contained in last year's bill—and January 1, 2007, this January, will be eligible for amnesty. This includes illegal aliens who have been here for a mere 5 months. They would be eligible for the amnesty, be eligible to be put on track for citizenship, even if they came into our country last December 31. Remember, we called out the National Guard, the President did, after the American people put the heat on, called out the National Guard. We are building fences now, not enough, but we are building barriers. We are increasing agents and we are saying: The border is closed. But we turn around and have a bill that says that somebody who got past the National Guard, got past the Border Patrol, got around the fence, is now going to be put on a path, guaranteed path to citizenship.

Now, I don't think that is good public policy. That does not breed respect for the law. I was a Federal prosecutor for nearly 15 years. I am telling you, if you don't enforce a law, it is undermined and undermines respect for the Government in general, frankly.

I will not go any further. I think our time is about finished. I would thank my colleagues for their attention to this bill. I hope they will be reading it. I hope the research we do might be helpful to some of you as you work on

it and try to decide how you should handle this very important piece of legislation. We need to do something. We need to do something that is good. We need to pass a bill. I guess no bill will be perfect, but we do not need to pass bills with serious flaws in them, those that undermine the principles that any effective immigration system should be founded on.

I will have extra time. We will talk about that later and talk about some other things I have.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:40 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM ACT OF 2007—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I understand under the order, Senator SESSIONS is to be recognized to speak for a period of time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BAUCUS. I have consulted with Senator SESSIONS. I asked if it was OK if I proceeded for 5 minutes preceding his remarks. Accordingly, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PAY RAISE FOR SOLDIERS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise in support of our troops. There are few things as important as the gift of one's labor, one's love, one's life. Our soldiers are asked to make generous sacrifices of these precious commodities every day. Our finest young soldiers work 19 hours a day in hot, dry, dangerous places such as Fallujah and Kabul. They do so because they have a deep love of country. Many of our soldiers make the ultimate sacrifice with their lives. Increasingly, we are asking more and more of our soldiers. In April, Secretary Gates announced he is extending the tours of duty for active-duty soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan from 12 to 15 months. Our troops have already accomplished so much: deposed Saddam Hussein, toppled the Taliban, responded to the threats posed by vicious terrorists around the world. They have done everything we have asked of them. I was, therefore, disappointed when I came across a newspaper article this weekend noting that the administration opposes a modest pay raise for American soldiers.

The House Defense authorization bill includes a one-half of 1 percent increase in military pay above the Presi-

dent's request. For the average new enlistee, this will amount to roughly \$75 per year in extra pay—clearly, not enough to cover additional costs: school clothes for kids, a family trip to the ballpark, a few tanks of gas at the prices we are stuck paying.

The increase is aimed at reducing the gap in pay between comparable military and civilian jobs that stands at about 4 percent today. Even after the proposed increase, that gap will remain at least 1.4 percent, clearly not keeping up with civilian pay increases.

Of the billions of dollars we spend on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it would seem absurd to oppose this small pay bump, but that is exactly what the administration is doing. In a May 17, 2007, letter to the House Armed Services Committee, the President's budget director announced the pay increase included in the House bill is "unnecessary." I believe it is necessary. I believe it is necessary to do anything we can to provide for the welfare of our fighting men and women. Salaries for newly minted enlistees start at about \$15,600 per year. To put this in perspective, new enlistees with three or more dependents are eligible for food stamps.

Among the sacrifices we ask of our men and women in harm's way, going hungry should not be one of them. In addition, the administration opposes a \$40 per month increase in allowances for the widows of slain soldiers. Again, this is a modest bump in benefits and pales in comparison to the sacrifice these families have made. Forty dollars a month extra won't make it any easier to face another day without a loved one who is lost, but it could help pay the rent, keep the heat on, and relieve a bit of stress for families facing a new world without their spouse. That is why I am urging the administration to reconsider their opposition to a pay increase and additional survivor benefit. Supporting our troops is something we all agree on, Republicans and Democrats alike.

I ask the President to reconsider his opposition to increased pay for our soldiers and aid for this war's widows. We may not all agree on what we should do in Iraq going forward, but I believe we can and should reach a simple accommodation on troop pay.

Mr. President, I see my friend getting prepared. I ask for 1 or 2 minutes' indulgence.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Mr. President, in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Bibles, the book of Ben Sirah counsels: "Observe the opportunity."

This year, the Senate has the opportunity to improve the health of millions of American children, for the next decade.

The Senate has the opportunity to renew and improve the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP.

Let us seize the opportunity.

There is no greater health care priority for me this year.

In a few short weeks, the Finance Committee will consider legislation to

reauthorize and strengthen this successful 10-year-old program.

Many of us were present in this Chamber when we created CHIP in 1997. Since then, this program has proven to be a true success.

Since its inception, CHIP has brought health insurance to more than 40 million low-income children.

It has saved the lives of many children, and it has improved the availability and quality of care for many more.

In my home State of Montana, Fawn Tuhy has some pretty active kids. Montana is a State full of active kids, and active kids get hurt.

Fawn's 2-year-old needed stitches after hitting her head. Fawn's 6-year-old broke his arm twice.

Fawn's medical bills could have sunk their family of six. But she credits CHIP with keeping her kids healthy, and her family afloat.

CHIP has made that kind of difference for millions of Americans, in the last 10 years.

Among families with incomes less than about \$34,000 a year—that is twice the poverty level—the share of uninsured children has dropped by a quarter.

CHIP has held the number of uninsured children down, even as the number of uninsured adult Americans has increased.

But Congress cannot rest on its laurels. We have to continue CHIP. We have to build on its success, and we have to do it before CHIP's funding expires, on September 30.

The Finance Committee is poised to act, with a markup early next month.

In this reauthorization, we will pursue five principles:

First, we must provide adequate funds to keep coverage for those who have it now.

Last week, the Congressional Budget Office reported that CHIP needs an additional \$13.4 billion, just to maintain current coverage.

Maintaining level funding is just not good enough. If funding stays flat, then 4 million American children could lose health coverage, over the next 10 years.

Second, we must also reach the 6 million uninsured children who are eligible for either CHIP or Medicaid coverage but not enrolled.

CBO says that the best opportunity to further reduce the number of uninsured children is to target CHIP enrollment toward more families whose incomes are below twice the poverty level.

Third, we must support State efforts to expand CHIP coverage to more kids. States have found innovative ways to reach as many uninsured kids as possible. States have acted according to their unique abilities and needs.

Fourth, we must improve the quality of health care that children receive.

We are making great strides to improve the quality of health care for adults through Medicare. Yet there is no comparable investment in quality